

TOPIC 9: BALANCING BEHAVIORS

Use this protocol with the client to identify the area that the client would like to focus on to manage their diabetes: food, exercise and physical activity, medications, monitoring, and getting regular health care.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Managing diabetes well and preventing complications requires balancing food intake, physical activity and medication. Monitoring blood glucose at home and regular checks of one's A1c also help the client to learn more about their diabetes and how to successfully manage it.

KEY MESSAGES

1. Keeping blood sugar levels within normal levels can be done by balancing the food you eat with the activity or exercise you get and the medications (if any) you take.
2. Food raises blood sugar, physical activity and medications will lower blood sugar, either directly or indirectly.
3. Regular monitoring of blood glucose helps the client and health care provider make decisions about the best course of treatment.

BACKGROUND

The key to gaining control of diabetes is to learn how to balance the things that affect blood sugar.

People with diabetes feel better when their blood sugars are consistently within their target range. More importantly, keeping the blood sugar at near normal levels, may help prevent complications or problems associated with diabetes such as heart disease, kidney disease, vision loss, nerve damage and problems with healing and circulation.

BALANCING BEHAVIORS

Each day people with diabetes make decisions that affect their blood sugar control. These decisions can include what kinds of food to eat and when, the amount of physical activity to do, how much medicine to take, and when to check blood sugars. It is helpful to have a good understanding of each of the factors that influence blood sugar in order to effectively balance them and achieve good blood sugar control.

The following information summarizes the information in upcoming modules dealing with food and meal planning, exercise and physical activity, medications, and blood sugar monitoring. It reinforces that the client is the primary, day-to-day manager of their condition.

FOOD AND MEAL PLANNING:

There is no single diabetes “diet”

While you may need to make changes on what, when, and how much you eat, you can be flexible in your choices

You can include many of your favorite foods in your diabetes meal plan

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Any type of physical activity lowers blood sugar

Physical activity also lowers stress, gives you energy, improves flexibility and balance, lowers heart disease risk, and helps one feel better overall

Physical activity can include aerobic exercise such as walking, biking or swimming; strength training; or simply being active throughout the day

MEDICATIONS

Your health care provider may prescribe one or more types of diabetes medications to help control your blood sugar

When starting a new medication, it is important to ask questions such as: How much? How often? Do I take medications with food or on an empty stomach? What should I do if I forget to take it? Are there side effects and if so, what can I do about them? Will my new diabetes medication cause a problem with other medications?

MONITORING BLOOD GLUCOSE

Your health care provider may want you to check your blood sugar at home

Checking your blood sugar is one way to learn how food, activity, and medications affect your blood sugar

Keep track of blood sugars in a log book with the date and time of day. Share your blood sugar values with your health care provider and diabetes team.

You and your doctor can use your blood sugars to help you make decisions about food, activity and medicine.

PATIENT OUTCOMES/GOALS

By the end of the educational session, the client with diabetes will be able to:

- State that blood sugar is affected by: food, exercise/activity and medications.
- State one benefit to keeping their blood sugar “in balance” and at their personal target goal.

CHW ACTIONS	PARTICIPANT ACTIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affirm what the participant has already accomplished regarding managing diabetes. • Ask the participant to identify what is currently working for them and what are the problem areas. • Ask how food affects blood glucose. • Ask how exercise affects blood glucose. • Ask how medication affects blood glucose. • Ask the participant to describe personal benefits to keeping blood glucose in balance. • Ask the participant how monitoring can help keep blood glucose in balance. • Help participant set a goal around keeping blood glucose in balance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe what is currently working well regarding managing diabetes. • Problem-solve what is not currently working well regarding balancing food, physical activity medication adherence, and monitoring blood sugar. • Identify personal benefits to keeping blood glucose in balance. • Set a goal around working toward keeping blood glucose in balance. Goals can include: • Recording daily food intake and activity • Monitoring blood sugars more often for a week to get a better idea on how food and activity affect blood sugars • Talking to one's health care provider about personal target or goals if they don't already know where they should be

TOOLS/TEACHING AIDES

- None

HANDOUTS

1. **Topic 9 Coversheet**.....[English](#) | [Spanish](#)
2. **Where Do I Begin? Living with Type 2 Diabetes**.....[English](#) | [Spanish](#)
Source: [American Diabetes Association](#)
3. **Action Plan**[English](#) | [Spanish](#)
Source: [Public Health – Seattle & King County](#)

REFERENCES

Type 2 Diabetes: A Curriculum for Patients and Health Professionals. American Diabetes Association, 2002.

American Diabetes Association, www.diabetes.org

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V.1.	12/23/2011	Original	KA/ JK	Yes
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V.2.1	07/24/2014	Updated Formatting	ND	Yes